

METAPHRIXUS INTUTUS BRUCE (CRUSTACEA: ISOPODA), A BOPYRID PARASITE NEW TO THE AUSTRALIAN FAUNA

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ABSTRACT

The first occurrence of the bopyrid isopod *Metaphrixus intutus* Bruce in Australian waters is recorded. This parasite is previously known only from Zanzibar.

KEYWORDS: Crustacea, Isopoda, Bopyridae, parasites, marine zoogeography, Australia.

The unusual bopyrid isopod parasite *Metaphrixus intutus* Bruce is known from a two male-female pairs found attached to specimens of the shrimp *Palaemonella rotumana* (Borradaile) found at Pange Reef, Zanzibar (Bruce 1965). There have been no subsequent reports of this species.

Through the kindness of Dr P. Doherty, it has been possible to study a further example found attached to a species of *Periclimenes* Linnaeus collected from a depth of 10m, in a dead colony of the coral *Pocillopora damicornis* Linnaeus, on the outer side of John Brewer Reef, Queensland, in 1982. Unfortunately the host is not sufficiently complete to be identified with certainty but it is most probably *Periclimenes grandis* (Stimpson), specimens of which were found at the same locality. The non-ovigerous parasite corresponds closely to the type specimen but is less mature and relatively smaller in size, about 1.5mm in length, and poorly pigmented. It is attached over the posterior right branchiostegite, with the cephalon placed beneath a raised flange derived from the hosts first abdominal pleuron. The mode of attachment is precisely as in the type material and is characteristic of the genus.

A further specimen has also been collected in the Northern Territory. R. Williams collected another example from Weed Reef, Darwin Harbour (12°29.2'S 30°47.4'E), Stn. AJB/14, at a depth of 7-10 m, on 10th April

1984, infesting a male *Palaemonella rotumana* (Borradaile), also on the right side. The female is subcircular in shape, diameter about 2.5 mm, packed with ova, with bands of dark pigmentation as described in the type specimen. No male could be found attached to female, in the marsupium or on the host. The female was attached to host in the same fashion as previously described specimens.

These further occurrences of *Metaphrixus intutus* represent a considerable extension of the range of the species, as well as an association with a new host genus. It would appear that the species must be naturally rare as the author has had occasion to examine large numbers of specimens of the genera *Palaemonella* Dana and *Periclimenes* from throughout most of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans and these records constitute only the second occurrence in over 20 years.

The specimens are deposited in the Northern Territory Museum collection, catalogue numbers NTM Cr. 000407 (John Brewer Reef) and NTM Cr. 001463 (Weed Reef).

REFERENCE

- Bruce, A.J. 1965 An interesting new phryxid (Epicaridea) parasitic on a pontoniid shrimp. *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* (13)8: 385-390.

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